

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART

Fifth Series

ESTABLISHED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS, 1832

CONDUCTED BY R. CHAMBERS (SECUNDUS)

No. 80.—VOL. II.

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1885.

PRICE 1½d.

TO CHINA IN HALF AN HOUR.

IN attempting a chatty description of a voyage to China made by the writer, by steamer from London, a difficulty befalls him at the outset; for it is impossible to adequately describe the 'all-gone' sensation that pervades your bosom as the steamer is hauled out of dock and you feel yourself slowly receding from familiar faces, which you are not to see again, perhaps, for many years—perhaps never; still within speaking distance, almost within reach of hands that have given yours the final grip, and yet, as you know and feel, fairly on your voyage to the other side of the globe. This is a trying moment, and we will not dwell on it, but wave our handkerchief for the last time, light a cigar, and try to pretend it is no more than an every-day occurrence.

The 'chops' of the Channel have been so often made the subject of description and vilification, that we need not enlarge upon them here. Having coasted round France and the Spanish Peninsula, we enter the Mediterranean at Gibraltar, and here experience our first spell of 'weather,' the sea being very rough and the vessel rolling heavily. The much-dreaded Bay of Biscay had disappointed us by being as calm as a millpond, save for the inevitable swell from the mighty Atlantic, which, however, was very gentle; but we now find almost a raging sea, the consequence of a high wind, whereby we are greatly distressed in mind—and stomach. Gibraltar is our first 'sight,' and we are determined not to miss it; so we manfully fix ourselves in odd corners where there is something to cling to, and where the wash of the sea—which sweeps the lower deck every minute—cannot carry us away, and prepare to have a good look at the famous Rock. It is indeed a rare sight and worth a drenching to witness, if you are lucky enough to pass it by daylight. Towering fourteen hundred feet above the sea-level, bold and abrupt in its outline, its formidable rows of teeth—British guns—menacing the

passing vessel in a most unmistakable manner, the Rock of Gibraltar leaves a more vivid and lasting impression on the beholder's mind than any of the other sights throughout the long voyage. The passage or strait is entirely commanded by the artillery, which can be relied on to attack successfully any vessel passing through, a fact which has given to this fortress its familiar name, 'the key of the Mediterranean.'

We continue our course down the Mediterranean, signal Malta as we pass, and in due time arrive at our next point, Alexandria, where we are to go ashore for the first time. 'Going ashore' involves disrobing yourself of the old garments you are wearing aboard ship, and a careful get-up in raiment proper to the occasion; so you retire in good time to the semi-privacy of your so-called stateroom—the name by which the steward dignifies the few cubic feet of space you are sharing with another passenger—preparatory to coming out in the most un-European guise your wardrobe permits of. For, while you are somewhat in the dark as to what you *ought* to put on, your ideas are quite fixed as to what you *ought not*—namely, the clothes you have been wearing at home. So it occurs that the result of the elaborate care bestowed by our passengers on this their first go-ashore toilet is generally striking, if not altogether satisfactory; and it is noticeable that the outfit most in favour usually includes a straw hat with a pugaree round it—the distinguishing badge of the foreign tourist, and, as we presently discover, worn by no one else. Having more or less successfully contended with the difficulties of dressing in a space occupied by two human beings, but only about half big enough for one, we are ready to take our places in the little boat that waits at the foot of the gangway in charge of the dragoman we have engaged to conduct us through the interesting city it is now our privilege to visit.

And truly, Alexandria is, or was, worth going all the way to see. Its crowded harbour; its busy, thronged streets; its magnificent square—

since looted and destroyed by the rebels in the late disturbances—its markets, villas, and gardens; its Cleopatra's Needles, of which there are still several dotted about, apparently to be had for the fetching; its bright, continental appearance, toned down, however, and modified by the unmistakable signs of antiquity which strike the observation and impress the mind of the beholder at all points; its strangely garbed inhabitants; its camels and donkeys, and—its dust: these all render Alexandria worthy of a longer visit than that afforded by a mere stay of a few hours; but we must make the best use of our eyes as our conveyance rolls along the dusty streets, and be grateful for a glance at people and things we would fain linger over. Pompey's Pillar, the Catacombs, and the Viceroy's Palace Garden duly visited, we make a purchase of green figs, dates, and other indigestibles at one of the shops, and then make the best of our way down to the boat that is waiting to convey us back to our steamer, whose whistle warns us she is going to make a move, and that we had better get aboard, if we don't want to be left behind in Egypt. Our destination being China, we obey the summons; and are not sorry to be out of the unfamiliar bustle of a strange city, with its throng of backsheesh-yelling beggars—the pest of all these places—and once more to set foot on the deck that we have now learned to look upon as home, and from which point of vantage we can take a parting look at scenes which will soon become only a memory of the past.

About a day's steam from Alexandria brings us to the mouth of the Suez Canal at Port Said, where we are to make another call. The steamer is moored alongside and tied fast, and two bridges or gangways of planks are set up from the wharf over the vessel's side and giving access to the ship's bunkers. Along the whole length of the said gangways is a line of dusky figures, each bending under a heavy load, contained in a kind of basket borne on the shoulders, the procession going at a dog-trot up one plank into the ship, and returning down the other. Your first bewilderment overcome, the clouds of black dust which assail your eyes and nose help you to realise the actual state of things: the vessel is taking in coal; and the dusky figures referred to are fetching it from a shed at the back of the wharf, each tipping his hundredweight or so into the bunker as he arrives there, and then filing off behind his comrades to fetch another load. There is no waste of time here; moments are precious in the trip of a steamer anxious to make a good passage; and the coolies—for such is the generic appellation of these hewers of wood and drawers of water—are kept to their work, not certainly by the slave-driver's whip, but by some other means apparently as efficient, for they go at a positive run with their tremendous loads, and are soon panting and perspiring in the most distressing manner.

Let us look a little closer at them, for the sight of such creatures is a novel one to people fresh from a country where the working-man lives like a human being, has a vote, and goes to franchise demonstrations. The sight, though painful, is full of interest for us. There they

go, close behind one another, 'working like niggers' as they are, black as the coal they carry, almost naked from head to foot, perspiration literally dripping from chin and elbows, panting, breathless as driven beasts, utterly undistinguishable one from another, except where a streak of gray hair betokens a wearer grown old in the service and only able to carry half a load, all clothed in the same livery—coal-dust, and every one straining himself to the uttermost to fulfil his toilsome task. These, then, are the miserable creatures whose bread is earned, literally and truly, by the sweat of their brows, and without whose aid the multifarious manufactures and products of England and the continent could never find their way to the distant markets of the Far East.

The Suez Canal is disappointing. Having read that nineteen million pounds sterling was sunk in making it, one expects to see something imposing, if not picturesque, for the money. Nothing of the kind. It is only a cutting through the sand, without embankment, except a little bit at one end, which is said to have cost an amount of money quite disproportionate to its utility. Although represented as almost a straight line on the maps, the canal is very sinuous throughout a part of its length; and as one cannot see round the corners, this gives a very singular effect to the spectator from the deck of a vessel going through. The banks are for the most part low, and a long stretch of desert is visible, so we have sand in front, sand behind, sand all around, and in fact seem to be sailing through sand on a veritable ship of the desert, and can hardly realise at times that we are on a sea-voyage. The view is monotony itself; and as progress through the canal is necessarily very slow, this part of the journey is wearisome in the extreme, and the two or three days our vessel takes in performing it hang very heavily on our hands. To make matters worse, we suffer from one of the plagues of Egypt, flies, which pestiferous insects invade the vessel from stem to stern. We likewise experience our first mosquito, which makes us, as Mark Twain says, 'think over a few bad words we heard in our youth.'

At last we are past Suez and running down the gulf; the Red Sea entered upon, and our sight-seeing at an end for a time. We begin to feel once more that we are fairly booked for a distant land, and settle down as comfortably as possible for the rest of the voyage. We now, one and all, consider ourselves old travellers; our conversation is seasoned (or tainted) with such bits of seafaring slang as we have been able to pick up, and our nearest friends would hardly know us in the disguises we think it the right thing to assume in the way of clothing. The heat is becoming demonstrative, and we even talk of sleeping on deck, or in hammocks out of doors. Sun-hats and helmets are brought out, and they are needed too, for although the upper deck is protected by an awning, it is unsafe to be abroad without a sufficient head-covering. They tell us this is the hottest part of the voyage, and we hope it is.

We do not call at Aden, our steamer having taken enough coal on board at Port Said to last as far as the next port of call, Singapore. Indeed,

for a week or two we might as well be in a coal-ship, for the fuel is piled on the deck each side of the engine-house, and of course the ship is in consequence plentifully besprinkled with dust from one end to the other. In the words of Tom Hood's mariner :

Our ship, says he,
Is black, d' ye see,
Because we carry coal.

This is necessitated by the length of the trip ; and the marvel is that enough can be stowed away in a vessel already overfull of merchandise, to last out the run.

Through the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, the immense Indian Ocean is now before us ; and our life is of the most uneventful description. Days expand into weeks with scarcely anything to break the monotony, and the pages of one's diary are beautifully clean. If a steamer passes near enough for us to read her name or distinguish the captain on the bridge, it marks an epoch in the profitless days and nights we are now frittering away. If a whale bumps against our keel—as whales will do—and makes us think we are discovering a new world, that causes a sensation for which we are devoutly thankful. We start a paper—the *Ocean Times*, of course—and its one solitary issue is almost learned by heart ; but somehow, nobody has energy enough to get up a second number. Of course the company has long been divided into cliques, which have all quarrelled with one another about everything, and even that diversion is at an end. We are as limp, aimless, miserable an aggregation of human beings as one would wish to see ; shut up together in the same house, as it were, yet withal thoroughly tired of each other's society. Deck-quoits, as an outdoor amusement, is languidly indulged in, and consists of trying to throw a ring made of a rope's end into a bucket, generally for a wager. This results in the discovery that the mouth of a bucket is not so large at a distance of ten feet as it is close to ; and the issue of each bout is chiefly remarkable from the number of quoits that are strewed about the deck and their amazing distance from the goal. A few of the most athletic among us even attempt to climb a rope ; but that is soon voted a bore.

And thus the time crawls by. A cup of tea and a biscuit brought into your cabin at six o'clock in the morning by the steward, then a walk on deck, with no particular garments on, till the bell advises you to dress for breakfast. After breakfast, a smoke, lounge, and 'snooze' till tiffin or lunch-time. Tiffin over, another smoke, lounge, and snooze, till dinner, the one event of the day, claims your attention at six o'clock. Dinner finished, a sense of rest—and indigestion—takes possession of the traveller's soul ; and as he lights the post-prandial pipe of peace, he gazes upwards at the great blinking stars with a look of pious gratitude. Night fairly set in, the passengers one by one disappear into their cabins ; some to reappear in pyjamas—the 'no-particular garments' of the early morn—in which they loom about the deck for coolness's sake ; and some to lie awake listening to the tattle of others in the saloon, and wondering if

the steward is ever going to put the lights out and send those people off to bed. At last we are all in our bunks, inhaling carbonic acid gas by the quart—for the sleeping berths are most confined, unwholesome cribs—and shall presently fall asleep to the lullaby of the mighty propeller, whose throb-throb sends us 'off' now as effectually as it formerly kept us awake.

Occasionally, perhaps, we sail into a shower of rain, which we can see for some time before we reach it ; and its concomitant of cool air amply compensates for the attendant inconveniences. By the way, when it rains in the tropics, it pours. The nights are almost as hot as the day, yet we are afraid of sleeping out of doors because of the heavy dew. Tried it one night, however, trusting to the awning to protect us ; but in the darkness we ran into one of the aforesaid showers of rain, and the sleep of the just was rudely disturbed. Why we should subsequently have attempted to arrange ourselves on and underneath the saloon table that night, instead of going to bed decently and comfortably, no one seemed to know ; but when Briton's sons are abroad, their behaviour is at times eccentric.

If we were not, one and all, as ignorant as people usually are about astronomy, the appearance of the new sky overhead would interest us more than it does ; as it is, we are limited to showing one another the splendid Southern Cross, which shines in these latitudes, and is conspicuous, even to an ordinary observer, among all the other constellations of the star-spangled heavens. It may be our imagination, but the moon and stars seem larger than we are accustomed to see them ; still, we are prepared for anything now in the way of strange sights, and are vain enough to conceal our ignorance under a show of indifference.

The course taken by our steamer precludes her calling at Ceylon, and we are deprived, to our disappointment, of sniffing the 'spicy breezes' that are said to blow there. Our next sight of land, in fact, is Acheen Point, island of Sumatra ; and we presently find ourselves running down the Malacca Straits, where there is plenty to feast the eyes upon after their long fast. In due time Singapore is reached, and our steamer gaily sails up alongside the Tanjong Pagar Wharf about breakfast-time of one of the hottest days on record. We go ashore, of course ; and many a strange spectacle greets us, and many a strange experience is ours as we make our way on foot, or preferably in the small carriages they call *gharries*, up the hot, dusty, three-mile road that leads from the quay to the settlement.

Time and tide and steamboats wait for no man ; and after one night in the harbour of Singapore—which is about enough, for the mosquitoes are terrible—we bid adieu to the land of the exotic and palm tree, and proceed on our course northward up the China Sea to our ultimate destination. In exchange for the passengers we left behind us at Singapore, our steamer has taken on board some hundreds of Chinese, who swarm the lower deck during the day, and at night are carefully secured under latches in one of the upper holds. Beyond a spasm of seasickness experienced by some of our company, and doubly disgusting to them because unexpected at the end of a long voyage, there is nothing to

record of the seven days' run that will bring us to our journey's end. Past Saigon in Cochinchina, where the French have got a foothold, and again, farther north, past Tonquin, where they are trying to get one, until at length we find ourselves in a maze amongst a group of islands which we remember are called the Ladrões, and of which Hong-kong is, to us at all events, the chief. Threading her way in and out, our steamer finally rounds the last point, and brings us past Stonecutter's Island into the magnificent harbour between Hong-kong island and the mainland. The town presents a very picturesque appearance, being built in a series of terraces, owing to the hilly formation of the island. It bears the original name of Victoria; and the sound of the church bells ashore, besides reminding us that it is Sunday evening as our good ship comes to anchor off the coast of the Flowery Land, helps us to realise that we are still within the limits of the British Empire, though more than ten thousand miles from home.

And now, having brought the reader to one of England's most distant territorial possessions, the author takes his leave of him with a very respectful chin-chin.

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANCES became accustomed to the presence of young Ramsay after this. He appeared almost every day, very often in the afternoon, eager for tea, and always disposed to inquire for further *renseignements*, though he was quite certain that he was not to leave England till autumn at the earliest. She began to regard him as a younger brother, or cousin at the least, a perfectly harmless individual, with whom she could talk when he wanted her with a gentle complacency, without any reference to her own pleasure. As a matter of fact it did not give her any pleasure to talk to Claude. She was kind to him for his sake; but she had no desire for his presence on her own account. It surprised her that he ever could have been thought of as a possible mate for Constance. Constance was so much cleverer, so much more advanced in every way than herself, that to suppose she could put up with what Frances found so little attractive, was a constant amazement to the girl. She could not but express this on one of the occasions, not so very frequent as she had expected, on which her mother and she were alone together.

'Is it really true,' she said at the end of a long silence, 'that there was a question of a marriage between Constance and Mr Ramsay?'

'It is really quite true,' said her mother with a smile. 'And why not? Do you disapprove?'

'It is not that I disapprove; I have no right to disapprove; it is only that it seems so impossible.'

'Why? I see nothing impossible in it. He is of suitable age; he is handsome. You cannot deny that he is handsome, however much you may dislike him, my dear.'

'But I don't dislike him at all; I like him very much—in a kind of way.'

'You have every appearance of doing so,' said Lady Markham with meaning. 'You talk to him more, I think, than to any one else.'

'That is because'—

'Oh, I don't ask any reason, Frances. If you like his society, that is reason enough—the best of reasons. And evidently he likes you. He would, no doubt, be more suitable to you than to Constance.'

'Mamma! I don't know what you mean.' Frances woke up suddenly from her musing state, and looked at her mother with wide open startled eyes.

'I don't mean anything. I only ask you to point out wherein his unsuitability lies. Young, handsome, *à la mode*, and very rich. What could a girl desire more? You think, perhaps, as you have been so simply brought up, that a heroine like Con should have had a Duke or an Earl at the least. But people think less of the importance of titles as they know Society better. Claude is of an excellent old family—better than many peers. She would have been a very fortunate young woman with such an establishment; but she has taken her own way. I hope you will never be so hot-headed as your sister, Frances. You look much more practical and reasonable. You will not, I think, dart off at a tangent without warning or thought.'

Frances looked her mother doubtfully in the face. Her feelings fluctuated strangely in respect to this central figure in the new world round her. To make acquaintance with your parents for the first time when you have reached the critical age, and are no longer able to accept everything with the matter-of-fact serenity of a child, is a curious experience. Children, indeed, are tremendous critics, at the tribunal of whose judgment we all stand unawares, and have our just place allotted to us, with an equity which happily leads to no practical conclusions, but which no tribunal on earth can equal for clear sight and remorseless decision. Eighteen is not quite so abstract as eight; yet the absence of familiarity, and that love which is instinctive, and happily quite above all decisions of the judgment, makes in such an extraordinary case as that of Frances, the sudden call upon the critical faculties, the consciousness that accompanies their exercise, and the underlying sense, never absent, that all this is unnatural and wrong, into a complication full of distress and uncertainty. A vague question whether it were possible that such a conflict as that which had ended in Constance's flight, should ever arise between Lady Markham and herself passed through the mind of Frances. If it should do so, the expedient which had been open to Constance would be to herself impossible. All pride and delicacy of feeling, all sense of natural justice, would prevent her from adopting that course. The question would have to be worked out between her mother and herself, should it ever occur. Was it possible that it could ever occur? She looked at Lady Markham, who had returned to her usual morning occupation of writing letters, with a questioning gaze. There had been a pause, and Lady Markham had waited for a moment for a reply. Then she

had taken up her pen again, and with a smiling nod had returned to her correspondence.

Frances sat and pondered with her face turned towards the writing-table, at which her mother spent so much of her time. The number of letters that were written there every morning filled her with amazement. Waring had written no letters, and received only one now and then, which Frances understood to be about business. She had looked very respectfully at first on the sheaves which were every day taken away, duly stamped, from that well-worn but much decorated writing-table. When it had been suggested to her that she too must have letters to write, she had dutifully compiled her little bulletin for her father, putting aside as quite a different matter the full chronicle of her proceedings, written at a great many *reprises*, to Mariuccia, which somehow did not seem at all to come under the same description. It had, however, begun to become apparent to Frances, unwillingly, as she made acquaintance with everything about her, that Lady Markham's correspondence was really by no means of the importance which at the first glance it appeared. It seemed to consist generally in the conveyance of little bits of news, of little engagements, of the echoes of what people said and did; and it was replied to by endless shoals of little notes on every variety of tinted, gilt, and perfumed paper, with every kind of monogram, crest, and device, and every new idea in shape and form which the genius of the fashionable stationer could work out. 'I have just heard from Lady So-and-so the funniest story,' Lady Markham would say to her son, repeating the anecdote—which on many occasions Frances, listening, did not see the point of. But then both mother and son were cleverer people than she was. 'I must write and let Mary St Serle and Louisa Avenel know—it will amuse them so;' and there was at once an addition of two letters to the budget. Frances did not think—all under her breath, as it were, in involuntary unexpressed comment—that the tale was worth a pretty sheet of paper, a pretty envelope—both decorated with Lady Markham's cipher and coronet—and a penny stamp. But so it was; and this was one of the principal occupations evidently of a great lady's life. Lady Markham considered it very grave, and 'a duty.' She allowed nothing to interfere with her correspondence. 'I have my letters to write,' she said, as who should say, 'I have my day's work to do.' By degrees Frances lost her respect for this day's work, and would watch the manufactory of one note after another with eyes that were unwillingly cynical, wondering within herself whether it would make any difference to the world if pen and ink were forbidden in that house. Markham, too, spoke of writing his letters as a valid reason for much consumption of time. But then, no doubt, Markham had land agents to write to, and lawyers, and other necessary people. In this, Frances did not do justice to her mother, who also had business letters to write, and did a great deal in stocks, and kept her eyes on the money market. The girl sat and watched her with a sort of fascination as her pen ran lightly over sheet after sheet. Sometimes Lady Markham was full of tender-

ness and generosity, and had the look of understanding everybody's feelings. She was never unkind. She never took a bad view of any one, or suggested evil or interested motives, as even Frances perceived, in her limited experience, so many people to do. But, on the other hand, there would come into her face sometimes a look—which seemed to say that she might be inexorable, if once she had made up her mind: a look before which it seemed to Frances that flight like that of Constance would be the easiest way. Frances was not sufficiently instructed in human nature to know that anomalies of this kind are common enough; and that nobody is always and in all matters good, any more than anybody is in all things ill. It troubled her to perceive the junction of these different qualities in her mother; and still more it troubled her to think what, in case of coming to some point of conflict, she should do? How would she get out of it? Would it be only by succumbing wholly, or had she the courage in her to fight it out?

'Little un,' said Markham, coming up to her suddenly, 'why do you look at the mother so? Are you measuring yourself against her, to see how things would stand if it came to a fight?'

'Markham!' Frances started with a great blush of guilt. 'I did not know you were here. I—never heard you come in.'

'You were so lost in thought. I have been here these five minutes, waiting for an opportunity to put in a word. Don't you know I'm a thought-reader, like those fellows that find pins? Take my advice, Fan, and never let it come to a fight.'

'I don't know how to fight,' she said, crimsoning more and more; 'and besides, I was not thinking—there is nothing to fight about.'

'Fibs, these last,' he said. 'Come out and take a little walk with me; you are looking pale; and I will tell you a thing or two.—Mother, I am going to take her out for a walk; she wants air.'

'Do, dear,' said Lady Markham, turning half round with a smile. 'After luncheon, she is going out with me; but in the meantime, you could not do better—get a little of the morning into her face, while I finish my letters.' She turned again with a soft smile on her face to send off that piece of information to Louisa Avenel and Mary St Serle, closing an envelope as she spoke, writing the address with such a pre-occupied yet amiable air—a woman who, but for having so much to do, would have had no thought or ambition beyond her house. Markham waited till Frances appeared in the trim little walking-dress which the mother had paid her the high compliment of making no change in. They turned their faces as usual towards the Park, where already, though Easter was very near, there was a flutter of fine company in preparation for the more serious glories of the Row, after the season had fairly set in.

'Little Fan, you mustn't fight,' were the first words that Markham said.

She felt her heart begin to beat loud. 'Markham! there is nothing to fight about—oh, nothing. What put fighting in your head?'

'Never mind. It is my duty to instruct your youth; and I think I see troubles brewing.'

Don't be so kind to that little beggar Claude. He is a selfish little beggar, though he looks so smooth; and since Constance won't have him, he will soon begin to think he may as well have you.'

'Markham!' Frances felt herself choking with horror and shame.

'You have got my name quite pat, my dear; but that is neither here nor there. Markham has nothing to do with it except to put you on your guard. Don't you know, you little innocent, what is the first duty of a mother? Then, I can tell you: to marry her daughters well; brilliantly, if possible, but at all events *well*—or anyhow to marry them; or else she is a failure; and all the birds of her set come round her and peck her to death.'

'I often don't understand your jokes,' said Frances with a little dignity, 'and I suppose this is a joke.'

'And you think it is a joke in doubtful taste! So should I, if I meant it that way, but I don't.—Listen, Fan; I am much of that opinion myself.'

'That a mother—that a lady—? You are always saying horrible things.'

'It is true, though—if it is best that a girl should marry—mind you, I only say if—then it is her mother's duty. You can't look out for yourself—at least I am very glad you are not of the kind that do, my little Fan.'

'Markham,' said Frances, with a dignity which seemed to raise her small person a foot at least, 'I have never heard such things talked about; and I don't wish to hear anything more, please.—In books,' she added, after a moment's interval, 'it is the gentlemen'—

'Who look out? But that is all changed, my dear. Fellows fall in love—which is quite different—and generally fall in love with the wrong person; but you see I was not supposing that you were likely to do anything so wild as that.'

'I hope not,' cried Frances hurriedly. 'However,' she added, after another pause, colouring deeply, but yet looking at him with a certain courageous air, 'if there was any question about being—married, which of course there is not—I never heard that there was any other way.'

'Brava, Fan! Come, now, here is the little thing's own opinion, which is worth a great deal. It would not matter, then, who the man was, so long as *that* happened, eh? Let us know the premises on either side.'

'You are a great deal older than I am, Markham,' said Frances.

'Granted, my dear—a great deal. And what then? I should be wiser, you mean to say? But so I am, Fan.'

'It was not *that* I meant. I mean, it is you who ought—to marry. You are a man. You are the eldest, the chief one of your family. I have always read in books'—

Markham put up his hand as a shield. He stopped to laugh, repeating over and over again that one note of mirth with which it was his wont to express his feelings. 'Brava, Fan!' he repeated when he could speak. 'You are a little Trojan. This is something like carrying the war into the enemy's country.' He was so much tickled by the assault, that the water stood in

his eyes. 'What a good thing we are not in the Row, where I should have been delivered over to the talk of the town. Frances, my little dear, you are the funniest of little philosophers.'

'Where is the fun?' said Frances gravely. 'And I am not a philosopher, Markham; I am only—your sister.'

At this the little man became serious all at once, and took her hand and drew it within his arm. They were walking up Constitution Hill, where there are not many spectators. 'Yes, my dear,' he said, 'you are as nice a little sister as a man could desire;' and walked on, holding her arm close to him with an expressive clasp which spoke more than words. The touch of nature and the little suggestive proffer of affection and kindred which was in the girl's words, touched his heart. He said nothing till they were about emerging upon the noise and clamour of the world at the great thoroughfare which they had to cross. Then 'After all,' he said, 'yours is a very natural proposition, Fan. It is I who ought to marry. Many people would say it was my duty; and perhaps I might have been of that opinion once. But I've a great deal on my conscience, dear. You think I'm rather a good little man, don't you? fond of ladies' society, and of my mother and little sister, which is such a good feature, everybody says? Well, but that's a mistake, my dear. I don't know that I am at all a fit person to be walking about London streets and into the Park with an innocent little creature such as you are, under my arm.'

'Markham!' she cried, with a tone which was half astonished, half indignant, and her arm thrilled within his—not, perhaps, with any intention of withdrawing itself; but that was what he thought.

'Wait,' he said, 'till I have got you safely across the Corner—there is always a crowd—and then, if you are frightened, and prefer another chaperon, we'll find one, you may be sure, before we have gone a dozen steps.—Come now; there is a little lull. Be plucky, and keep your head, Fan.'

'I want no other chaperon, Markham; I like you.'

'Do you, my dear? Well, you can't think what a pleasure that is to me, Fan. You wouldn't, probably, if you knew me better. However, you must stick to that opinion as long as you can. Who, do you think, would marry me if I were to try? An ugly little fellow, not very well off, with several very bad tendencies, and—a mother.'

'A mother, Markham?'

'Yes, my dear; to whom he is devoted—who must always be the first to him. That's a beautiful sentiment, don't you think? But wives have a way of not liking it. I could not force her to call herself the Dowager, could I, Fan? She is a pretty woman yet. She is really younger than I am. She would not like it.'

'I think you are only making fun of me, Markham. I don't know what you mean. What could mamma have to do with it? If she so much wanted Constance to marry, surely she must want you still more, for you are so much older; and then'—

'There is no want of arguments,' he said with

a laugh, shaking his head. 'Conviction is what is wanted. There might have been times when I should have much relished your advice; but nobody would have had me, fortunately. No, I must not give up the mother, my dear. Don't you know I was the cause of all the mischief—at least of a great part of the mischief—when your father went away? And now, I must make a mess of it again, and put folly into Con's head. The mother is an angel, Fan, or she would not trust you with me.'

It flashed across Frances's memory that Constance had warned her not to let herself fall into Markham's hands; but this only bewildered the girl in the softening of her heart to him, and in the general bewilderment into which she was thus thrown back. 'I do not believe you can be bad,' she said earnestly; 'you must be doing yourself injustice.'

By this time they were in the Row in all the brightness of the crowd, which, if less great than at a later period, was more friendly. Markham had begun to pull off his hat to every third lady he met, to put out his hand right and left, to distribute nods and greetings. 'We'll resume the subject some time or other,' he said with a smile aside to Frances, disengaging her arm from his. The girl felt as if she had suddenly lost her anchorage, and was thrown adrift upon this sea of strange faces; and thrown at the same time back into a moral chaos, full of new difficulties and wonders, out of which she could not see her way.

THE FUTURE OF TELEGRAPHS AND TELEPHONES.

DWELLERS near Cheapside, London, may have observed during the past year the gradual growth of the new story which has been added to the Central Telegraph Office. The work has now been finished; an enormous extra weight of stone and iron has been superimposed upon the burden borne by the foundations at St Martin's-le-Grand; and a vastly increased space has been placed at the disposal of the postal authorities. But the whole of the new space has already been filled with the overflow of the operators, who, with their instruments, have been crowded together in what has hitherto been the upper story of the building; and when the sixpenny rate, promised for the first of August, is introduced, a still further expansion and a renewed cry for space may be expected. There seems to be no limit to the steady growth of a system which, fifteen years ago, when the telegraphs were taken over by the government, was even then considered gigantic.

Only sixty-eight years have passed away since Sir Francis Ronalds erected two huge wooden frames upon a lawn or grass plot at Hammer-smith. Upon each frame he placed a number of insulating loops of silk, and backwards and forwards from frame to frame he stretched a thin iron wire, which covered in one continuous length a distance of rather more than eight miles. Electro-magnetism had not then been discovered; but by means of static discharges, which caused the divergence of two pith-balls suspended side by side at the other end of the

wire, he succeeded in transmitting signals with rapidity and accuracy. Firmly convinced of the superiority of his new system as compared with the clumsy semaphores of the Admiralty, which wielded their ungainly arms on all the hill-tops between London and Dover, he wrote to the Admiralty, suggesting its adoption; and received from Mr Barrow, the secretary, the memorable answer, 'that telegraphs of any kind were then wholly unnecessary, and that no other than the one then in use would be adopted.' The electric telegraph returned to obscurity for twenty years; but now, of all the ancient semaphores, only one or two are preserved as curiosities.

So much have times altered in the last fifty years, that the electric telegraph itself, which now reaches its thin arms into more than six thousand offices, is threatened in its turn with serious rivalry at the hands of a youthful but vigorous competitor, the telephone. At present, the progress of telephony in England is slow; but its advantages are such that its ultimate popularity cannot be a matter of doubt. It is no small benefit to be able to recognise voices, to transact business with promptitude by word of mouth, to get a reply, 'Yes' or 'No,' on the spot, instead of having to rush to the nearest telegraph office. These are claims to recognition which cannot fail to make themselves felt in the course of time. The small progress made at present may be set down to a number of causes, the chief of which are, briefly, as follows: First, the monopoly of the Post-office, which requires the telephone Companies to pay a royalty of ten per cent. on their gross receipts; second, the large sums expended in buying up patent rights; third, the reckless speculation on the part of the promoters of certain Companies, the uncomfortable relations between the parent and the affiliated Companies, and the consequent inflation of stock; and last, our old enemy, the climate of the British Isles, which, with its fogs, its rains, and its sudden changes, plays havoc with the delicate electrical currents employed in telephony.

But it has already become evident that these difficulties will soon be smoothed away. It is not many months since the late Mr Fawcett and the Chancellor of the Exchequer removed several of the restrictions which the previous state of the law had compelled the Post-office to impose; and among other things, the important privilege was conceded of connecting any two towns, without limitation, by means of trunk wires. The ruinous results of undue speculation can only be corrected by time. Year by year new improvements are made in the wires and the apparatus; more and more distinctness is attained in the transmission of articulate sounds; and the resources of science in overcoming the effects of our deplorable climate are far from being exhausted. Moreover, there is much to be expected from the education of the public in the use of the telephone. Thus, in the Royal Exchange of Glasgow, any one can communicate with any telephone subscriber in the city and vicinity, on payment of threepence, three minutes' conversation being allowed for that sum.

A great future is doubtless in store for the telephone. At present, in the United Kingdom the owners of telephones number not more than ten or twelve thousand; but in the United States,

the fatherland of the new invention, more than a hundred and thirty thousand have already been enrolled. In France and Italy, the numbers are about the same as in England. In Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands, there are not so many. But there is no reason to doubt that the example of development shown by America will be followed in other countries, and the question arises: To what extent will the telephone supplant the telegraph in England, and how far will the revenue of the telegraph department be affected?

On the whole, it is probable that the telephone will find its chief sphere of utility in establishing communications between inhabitants of the same town, and that the telegraph will maintain its superiority where long distances are concerned. But the telephone Companies will undoubtedly erect trunk wires between large towns, such as Edinburgh and Glasgow, or Liverpool and Manchester; and this being so, they cannot fail to divert from the Post-office a large share of its business. On the other hand, it must be remembered that mercantile transactions cannot be conducted entirely by word of mouth; and a telegram has this advantage over a telephonic message that it is a record or voucher which, like a letter, can be produced at any time as evidence. We may conclude, therefore, that the telegraph will not be extinguished by the telephone, although its business will probably be somewhat reduced; as their functions become differentiated, the two will coexist, and each in its proper sphere supply a definite want. As for the national revenue, so long as the Companies continue to pay an annual royalty of ten per cent. on their gross receipts, it can hardly be seriously affected.

Now comes a question of policy which can only be decided by parliament. The charge for a telegram is fixed by statute. The charge for a communication by telephone must depend upon the cost at which the Companies will be able to provide wires and instruments for their customers; and inasmuch as a large portion of the cost of the telegraphs consists of the wages of the operators—and in the case of the telephones this cost will be saved, because the customers will work the instruments themselves—it is very probable that in the end telephony may prove the cheaper agency of the two. It may happen, therefore, that an inhabitant of Edinburgh wishing to communicate with a friend in Glasgow will have a choice between two different rates of charge. Now, the main object of the governmental control of the telegraphs is to secure a uniform rate of charge throughout the country; and apparently a state of things will soon come to pass under which that object will to some extent be defeated. Whether under the circumstances it would be right for parliament to purchase the telephones as it purchased the telegraphs, is a question which must be left to the future; but if so, it is to be hoped that the bargain may be effected on more reasonable terms.

In the meantime, there is doubtless much scope for the development of the Post-office telegraph system as a means for the rapid transmission of written—as compared with oral—communications, not only between distant towns, but also between different parts of the same town. In particular,

the conveyance of letters through tubes by means of compressed air is worthy of consideration. Years ago, there existed in London a subterranean passage about two feet wide, extending from Cheapside to Euston Square, along which a train of trucks containing mail-bags was blown at a surprising rate. At the present time, all the telegraph offices in the neighbourhood of the General Post-office are connected with the central office by leaden tubes from one and a half to two and a quarter inches in diameter. Messages packed into cylindrical carriers are blown or sucked through these tubes with great velocity by air-pumps, which are worked by four huge steam-engines of fifty horse-power each. The same system is applied on a much smaller scale in Manchester, Liverpool, and Glasgow; but in all four places the engine-power is concentrated at one spot from which the tubes radiate, and the tubes carry nothing but telegrams. In Paris and Berlin, there are engine-stations in various parts of the town, and the tubes are used for blowing letters and postcards, as well as telegrams, at a very moderate charge. In this matter, as on a former occasion we hinted, there seems to be no reason why we should not borrow a leaf from the books of our neighbours.

There is one portion of the telegraph business which is not likely to be in any way affected by the rivalry of the telephone, and that is, the transmission of news for the newspapers. Our readers may not be aware that the charges for newspaper telegrams are not the same as those for ordinary telegrams. The charge for the newspapers during the night-time is one shilling for every hundred words; and if the same message is sent to more than one newspaper, the charge for each newspaper, after the first, is twopence for every hundred words. It is easy to see, therefore, that by a little combination and arrangement, a newspaper can secure all its news at a charge, for every hundred words, not much exceeding twopence. It would be interesting to know whether the Post-office makes any profit out of this department of its business; but in any case it must be a long time before the telephone Companies can venture to compete with it, so long as the charge remains unaltered.

WALTER DREW.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. II.

THE morning after the arrival of Colonel Stanton's letter, and that on which I was to set out for London, dawned brightly and cheerfully. Aunt Marjory intrusted me, of course, with several small commissions which would have been better executed at Coventry; but then what woman ever could resist saddling a friend going to the metropolis with a few trifling responsibilities? My father, who retained some of the cheerfulness inspired by the colonel's letter, gave me a line of introduction to his old companion, which my aunt insisted on seeing placed carefully in my pocket-book, and the pocket-book securely deposited in the inner breast-pocket of my coat; which done, she laughingly patted me on the shoulder, saying: 'There, John; take care of that; it is your fairy passport to love and fortune.—You needn't

frown at aunt; many a true word is spoken in jest, you know.'

There was plenty of food for reflection during my journey to town. The main object of my mission—the arranging for the purchase of a physician's practice; or, failing that, the selection of a locality in which I might make one for myself—was the chief subject of my thoughts as I whirled along. But my meditations were not wholly fixed upon this topic. As I looked out on the fields, in which the hay was fast ripening under a brilliant sun, my thoughts, by a strange train of associations, reverted to a former memorable scene, and the face of the 'fair unknown' flitted between me and the outside world on which I looked. My errant fancy took me again to North Wales, to that last day of my last year's brief holiday, when I wandered aimlessly along the banks of the beautiful Conway. My steps were arrested by a sudden scream higher up the river. Hastening onwards for several hundred yards, I saw an upturned boat in the water, and the tawny head of a man who was swimming strongly from the shore. On rushing to the scene, I found a young, dark-haired female seated on the bank, her dress disordered and wet, who, with clasped hands and eyes staring at the river, was uttering scream after scream. The owner of the tawny head dived several times, and at last brought to the surface with one hand the figure of a second female, while with the other he seized hold of the boat. One glance, and I was swimming towards them. In a few moments I had relieved the exhausted Welshman, and brought the rescued one to shore. Life appeared to be quite extinct, even to my professional eyes. But I had strong faith in the doctrine of perseverance in such cases; and, to be brief, my first patient, after a long and almost hopeless struggle, was at last restored to life and consciousness. On the arrival of the local doctor, a vulgar, fussy individual, who appeared to deprecate any interference, I retired, and that night was on my way to Brierleigh Rectory. I had learned only two small facts concerning the young ladies—that the name of the dark-haired one was Miss Winter—and that they were the same whom I had often met in my rambles, when the fair face, violet eyes, and sunny hair of her companion, the rescued one, had given to my musings the first colouring of romance with which they had ever been tinged. My reverie was only shattered by the dashing of the train into Euston Station.

I had scarcely reached the platform, when a loud peal of thunder warned me that my chance of a cab depended on the exercise of a little extra activity. By the opportune help of a porter, I got a four-wheeler for self and luggage, and was soon clear of the bustle, altercation, and scrambling which a plump of rain on the arrival of a train usually produces. We had turned into Euston Road, when the sky was lit up by a vivid flash of lightning, followed by a loud and prolonged peal right overhead. As I watched the rain descend in sheets, turning the channels into muddy brooks, and driving the pedestrians helter-skelter under cover, my attention was

attracted by the plunging of a pair of spirited bays harnessed to a green brougham, which stood on the opposite side of the road, a little in advance. The cabman, with professional curiosity, slackened speed. There was little occasion for alarm, however, seeing that the horses' heads had already been seized by two grooms from a neighbouring mews; and I was just on the point of closing the window, when, on the cab coming abreast of the carriage, I distinctly saw—in the occupants of the latter—the two beings who had so lately occupied my day-dreams. The cab was well ahead before I had collected my dazed senses. The insane idea for a moment flashed into my mind of turning back and following the carriage until I had seen it to its destination; but on second thoughts, I abandoned the idea, and told the caddy to drive straight to the hotel.

Arrived at the *Tavistock*, I soon arranged for my stay, got rid of my travel-stains, and sauntered into the coffee-room, where I at once ordered a chop, and took up a newspaper to pass the time till its arrival. I was unable, however, to fix my attention for more than a few moments at a time; the incident of my drive thither would obtrude itself in spite of me. An unexpected source of distraction at last caused me to forget the green brougham for a time at least. Glancing up from the paper, I was curiously attracted by the full-length reflection of a stranger as seen by me in one of the pier-glasses. He was standing on the hearth at the opposite end of the room, quietly engaged in the kill-time occupation of trimming his finger-nails. He was over six feet in height, erect and strongly built; but the figure was if anything a trifle too portly for one of his apparent age, which might be some twenty-four years. He was dressed neatly and with evident care. His head was well shaped, well poised, and surmounted by short clustering dark-brown curls. The face was round, healthy-looking, and jovial; lit up by a pair of fine large hazel eyes, brimful of *bonhomie* and goodwill.

As I gazed, the stranger's face seemed to suggest to me the likeness of some other face with which I had long been familiar. Every one has experienced the tantalising feeling of looking on a countenance which he vainly strives to identify with some one he has known or previously met, how it haunts him, and will not be shut out, and how the effort to associate it with some time, place, or circumstance, proceeds even against the will, and if by any chance interrupted, will renew itself the moment the mind is again at liberty. Such was my case. Where had I seen that face? I became every moment more and more certain that this stranger resembled some one I had known.

The arrival of the waiter with my lunch caused me to change my seat for one from which the stranger could no longer be observed; and when I had eaten my modest meal and prepared to go out, I found he had already left the room. I now proposed to devote the afternoon to executing Aunt Marjory's little commissions, as also one my father had charged me with respecting some pictures. I should thus, I thought, free my hands for commencing in

earnest next day the prosecution of my own proper plans. My aunt's business occupied but a short time; at the end of which, the day being again bright and fine, I sauntered leisurely westward through the crowded Strand to the address of a well-known picture-dealer, for whom my father had worked for many years.

Mr Shadrach was a civil-spoken, sunny, cheery, affable little fellow. He professed great pleasure at meeting the son of his 'good friend,' whom he was pleased to consider a 'very nice, decent gentleman,' and a 'very fair workman.' I was too well accustomed to the commercial aspect of my father's 'studies' to affect any surprise or take any offence at the little man's style of speech, and was soon engrossed in divers details relative to the 'business.' Trade was bad, very bad; man and boy, Shadrach had never known things worse: thirty by twenty-four landscapes English, twenty-four by sixteen sea-pieces, were moving a little: large canvases hopeless: some demand certainly for Highland glens with deer: and so forth. In prattle of such a sort, half an hour slipped by, when Shadrach invited me to look at some of his more valuable stock. I gladly accepted, and was shown into a long well-lighted room, furnished with a number of chairs and lounges, and containing a really excellent collection. How many were the genuine product of the masters whose names they bore, I attempted not to discriminate. Nor did my guide have much to say on the intrinsic merit of the works themselves; although he was voluble enough as to their reputed histories, the hands through which they had passed before coming into his, and the great sales at which some of them had figured—and figured so highly, too, as he was pleased to add, with a chuckle. I was gazing intently on a modern battle-piece, when my attention was arrested by the sound of a loud, ringing, cheerful voice behind me, exclaiming: 'How do you do, Mr Shadrach. I hope I find you well?'

'Ah! my very good friend, Mr Drew; enchanted to see you!' answered Shadrach, bowing politely, and shaking hands with the new-comer. 'I am quite well, thank you. And—I suppose I need not ask after the state of your own health, you young Samson!'

The first glance had told me that I was face to face with the stranger of the *Tavistock*, whose physiognomy had so exercised my memory.

'Allow me to introduce you two gentlemen,' said the picture-dealer without further ceremony. 'You ought to know one another, and be good boys together.'

The stranger held out his hand with hearty frankness and politeness. 'Glad to meet you, sir, I am sure,' said he, his fresh-looking face and fine eyes beaming with good-nature. 'But I trust,' he added with a laugh, 'you are not going to enlist under Shadrach's colours. It's all fight and no pay, let me tell you, even as it was with the Turks you have been admiring.—You know that's the truth, and nothing but the truth, don't you, Shadrach?'

'Ha, ha! You will always make the big jokes, Mr Goliath,' returned the Jew, smiling blandly.

'Well, well,' laughed Mr Drew, 'I will give you a chance to redeem your character presently.

I have just dropped in to afford you the pleasure of making out a little cheque, payable to yours truly.'

'Ho, ho! You make Mr Charlton believe anything you like,' grinned Shadrach, a trifle disconcerted.—'Have the goodness, then, Mr Samson, to point out one or two of your mountain pieces to my young friend, and we shall rejoice him presently.'

Mr Drew, with a good-humoured smile, placed me in front of a large picture, and then went out after Mr Shadrach. In the picture was some mountain scenery very cleverly painted. A noble-looking hound lay panting among the rocks by the loch-side, which formed the foreground, at a short distance from a wounded and dying stag, which it had evidently followed long after its fellows had given up the pursuit, and until it saw the quarry drop, when its own overtaxed strength had collapsed. The painting was certainly an admirable one, though with traces of a hasty execution. I was turning away from it, when my eye caught the imprint, 'Walter Drew, Junior.' I can compare the shock this conjunction of Christian and surname gave me to nothing more apt than a first experience in handling an electric eel. There was no room, no necessity for reasoning. Instinctively I knew that this gigantic, jovial, unartist-like artist was the son of the man who had caused my father's misfortunes, and probably altered the whole tenor of my own career. The face, too, that had so haunted me—was it not like, and yet strangely unlike, the portrait of the fashionable Mr Drew which hung in my father's study, and which I could remember so well? It was the same head rather than the same face; for, with the exception of the brows and the expression of the eyes, which were common to both, the elder Drew was by far the handsomer man.

I continued standing, with my eyes fixed on the picture, without seeing it, a strange medley of thoughts passing through my mind. My first impulse, when they reverted to my new acquaintance, was quietly to disengage myself from any further familiarities; to bid him a civil good-bye, in fact, and depart. But after all, what had passed was a mere interchange of courtesies, that would naturally cease with the occasion. Nor could I repress a strong feeling of curiosity to know something more of this singular young fellow, arising partly, perhaps, from an innate fondness for character-study, but more from a desire to know what manner of man the son of such a father might be. My name evidently awoke no memories for him; it was certain, therefore, he knew nothing of that part of his father's history which was so painfully bound up with my own. I concluded, therefore, to let matters take their own course; and had scarcely done so, when Shadrach and Drew returned, both apparently in good-humour.

'I hope, Mr Charlton,' the latter said, 'you have not been doing penance all this while before that pot-boiler of mine. Mr Shadrach has just been telling me that you have had the good sense to let the fine arts alone.'

'The good sense, you mean, to avoid what I have not a vestige of talent for,' I answered, smiling.

'Be grateful, sir—be grateful. Believe me, a man had better be born with a wooden leg—with a wooden head even, than with the notion that he can paint.—By the way, am I mistaken in thinking I saw you at the *Tavistock* to-day?'

'I am staying there for the present.'

'That's jolly!' exclaimed Drew. 'I also "find my warmest welcome at an inn;" and as it happens we lodge at the same caravansary, we can trot thither in company, you know, if you are not otherwise engaged.'

There was no resisting him. After bidding Shadrach a formal good-bye, I found myself in the street with the son of Walter Drew. There was a magnetism about the fellow which I could not repel; a charm in his superabundant good-health and gay spirits; a spell in his conversation, which was quaint without being vulgar; a glamour, in short, about the whole man, which made me think more than once of the singular influence his father had exercised over mine. Long before we had reached our hotel, I had agreed to dine with him, and afterwards to accompany him to the theatre in the evening.

That same afternoon, I wrote to my father on the subject of my visit to Shadrach, but, for various reasons, avoided for the present all allusion to my new acquaintance and to my belief as to his parentage. I also wrote at some length to my Aunt Marjory ament her various commissions, telling her jestingly that I would defer the pleasure of proposing to Miss Stanton until I had found a field for my industry and a home to which I might transfer her. Needless to say, I avoided all reference to the day's adventures—the very thought of aunty coming to know of the green brougham made me wince. No; I would make no more confidences on that score. I inquired of course for the welfare of Tom and Gip, and wound up my somewhat hastily written epistle with a few sincere expressions of hope that I should be able to give a good account of myself and prospects in the course of a few days.

A NIGHT IN A LOG-HUT.

LONG lines of Atlantic rollers ruffle the surface of the sea as far as the eye can pierce the twilight, and gathering force and velocity as they approach the shore, curl their crests at last, and break upon the sandy beach with a violence which sends clouds of spray high into the air. The ceaseless voice of the surf drowns all other sounds, though at a hundred yards' distance the grasshoppers and crickets are chirping shrilly in the still summer night, the locusts are buzzing, and the tree-frogs murdering sleep with their strange whistling croak, while the gloom of the pinewoods is illumined by the flashing of countless myriads of fireflies. It is one of those heavy sultry summer nights, when even a breeze from the ocean fails to cool the oppressive atmosphere, and when a desultory stroll on the beach, or the lazy ease of a hammock in the dim moonlight, is preferable to bed, with its hypothetical sleep, and more than hypothetical mosquitoes.

Now and then, the semi-darkness is pierced by the flare of an ascending rocket, or a shower of coloured stars from the humbler 'fire-cracker';

for the 'Glorious Fourth of July' is at hand, and the patriotic American youth is squandering his substance in anticipation of that festal anniversary. But far away to the north-west there are fireworks visible which defy the pyrotechnist's puny efforts at imitation, and many a midnight stroller pauses on his way to admire the wonderful effects produced by the lightning, which plays almost incessantly through the dense bank of clouds on the horizon. The spectacle is unusually grand even for this country of grand atmospheric effects. Piled up as it were upon the extreme edge of the visible earth is a rugged mass of vapour in the otherwise cloudless heaven. It presents an appearance of absolute ponderous solidity, a panorama of mountain and chasm, of overhanging crags and towering cliffs, crowned with forest trees; while here and there is the semblance of massive turrets and vast piles of masonry, peeping from among dense forest growth. And again, as the vivid blue flashes play through the mass, one sees that there are really two separate banks of cloud between which the storm is raging, the further serving as a dark background to the picture, while the intense light reveals in the nearer a yet more fantastic landscape of wild mountain scenery. It is a scene such as Dore's weird imagination loved to portray; and one almost expects to descry opposing hosts of Titan forms, peopling the cloud-world, and hurling thunderbolts against the pinnacles and battlements, whose outlines stand forth in such bold relief against the clear midnight sky.

From a more practical and prosaic point of view, there is the greater satisfaction in witnessing this magnificent spectacle owing to the consideration that it lies far away to the north-west, while our sea-breeze comes from a south-easterly direction; and the reflection that 'They are having a tremendous storm somewhere up-country,' adds a sort of relish to the stray remarks on the beauty of the night, dropped from time to time as one after another of the strolling couples passes our gate on the homeward way.

'One more pipe before turning in,' is the unanimous resolution among the party assembled on the broad piazza surrounding the 'log-hut' in which we have taken up our summer quarters. The calumet is filled, and is fairly under weigh, when a sudden exclamation from more than one of the circle rouses us from our semi-somnolence.

'By Jove, the wind has gone round!'

True enough; the steady light sea-breeze, which has been vainly striving all evening to cool us, has suddenly dropped, and in a moment its place is taken by a fitful rush of sulphurous air from the land-side. Only those who have had experience of the abruptness of such changes on the west coast of the Atlantic, and of the stifling oppressiveness of the land-breeze as it sweeps over miles of sterile sun-baked sand, can realise what that change meant to us. Just now we had been abusing the gentle zephyr for its lack of cooling properties. Now we were ready to vow that it had been a veritable 'blizzard,' compared with the stove-like atmosphere which had succeeded. And almost before we were able to realise the fact of the change, an equally sudden

transformation had taken place in the appearance of the night. The distant cloud-bank had assumed gigantic proportions and swept across the whole visible sky; the crescent moon had vanished; the advancing tide meeting the wind, had commenced to lash the shore with double fury; the lightning no longer played in the far distance, but now flashed in broad sheets from side to side of the horizon; and the idle saunterers were hastening with considerably accelerated pace to the shelter of their own roofs.

There is no further talk of last pipes among our party, the advisability of making things taut suggesting itself as a matter of far more pressing importance. Storm-shutters are quickly closed, hammocks and rocking-chairs snugly housed; and after a spell of hard labour, we at last disperse to our respective rooms, with a comforting sense of being better prepared for coming events than most of our too confiding neighbours.

The rapid advance of the clouds seems for the time to have arrested the actual outbreak of the storm. Now and again a vivid flash makes itself visible in spite of shutters and blinds; but the sullen roar of the thunder is slow to follow, and but for the oppression in the air and the moaning of the storm-gusts among the pines to landward, one might fancy that the clouds were even yet going to blow harmlessly over. But the delusion is too pleasing to last long. A more protracted spell of darkness than usual is suddenly broken by a glare of light, compared with which the former flashes were but as the flickering of a candle. Instantly, almost before darkness has re-covered the earth, follows a crash as of falling masonry, short, abrupt, and intensely resonant. Then there is a momentary silence, and then—it rains! As I write that word, I cannot help smiling to think of its impotence, its utter inadequacy to describe that down-pour. The real fact is that it does not stop to rain, as the word is understood in England. The clouds simply dissolve and come down, not in drops, nor in the fine slanting lines with which thunder-showers are depicted in wood-engravings, but *en masse*, a homogeneous liquid deluge. Instantly from every projecting edge of the roof a sheet of water is precipitated to the ground below; and as the wind rises from a mere fitful breeze to a stiff nor'-wester, tugging at the shutters, and whistling among the supports of the piazza, the flood begins to spy out the weak spots in our defences; and through every chink and cranny, beneath the doors, between the window-sashes, and wherever the planks have shrunk during the recent long spell of dry summer weather, a series of rivulets begin to make their way indoors. Mingled with the flashing of the storm and the moan of the wind is now to be heard a steady drip, drip, drip from ceiling to floor. By-and-by, two or three early-to-bed occupants of the upper rooms are heard stamping about overhead, searching for leaks, and for the wherewithal to stop them temporarily at least. Presently, one after another steals down-stairs, with a long face and piteous appeals for assistance. One has a miniature water-spout descending upon his pillow; a second has retired leaving the skylight open over his toilet-table, and has awoke to find his brushes and his dressing-case converted into mere islands in

a swamp; a third finds his stock of boots and shoes half-filled with water, owing to the loss of a shingle from the roof; while a fourth, after a long search for the weak spot, has discovered it in the outer wall of his hanging-closet, where his reserve of clothing is being rapidly reduced to a state of sodden pulp. Each has his grievance to relate; but while sympathy is plentiful, aid is not so readily forthcoming. It is *sauf qui peut*. Each has suffered alike, and each is engaged in a purely personal salvage-enterprise, or in taking additional precautionary measures, which allow him no leisure to alleviate the distresses of his fellow-sufferers.

But at length all present disasters are in a fair way to be remedied, and once more the party disperses, to snatch what sleep we may between the paroxysms of the storm, with the comforting thought that things are already so bad that they can hardly become worse, unless the wind rises sufficiently to remove our roof bodily. The worst of the leaks are plugged, and all available basins and cans have been utilised to catch the water from the lesser chinks, so nothing is left but to wait for morning's light to reveal the full measure of our disasters. Again and again during the hours of darkness do the elements seem to gather all their malice and vent it upon our frail tenement. But the uprights stand firm, the beams are staunch, and the doors and shutters resist every assault of wind and rain. Shortly before daylight the storm abates, and the lull allows of an hour or two of quiet sleep, while the clouds disperse, and the sun comes up into a serene vapourless sky; and when we assemble at the breakfast table, and each has leisure to recount his own experiences, we have reason to congratulate ourselves that our 'log-hut' has suffered no more serious damage than a few hours in the hands of the local carpenter will suffice to repair.

THE ELEPHANT-TAMER.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAP. I.—THE TAMING OF SHAITÁN.

'WILL the Sahib shoot it as it stands in the stable, or shall we take it outside the kheddah to be shot?'

'I'll shoot it in the stable, jemadar. It would be dangerous to attempt to move it. Maharaja and Sundara could easily drag the body outside, afterwards. See that the two are ready harnessed to-morrow morning.'

'At what time will the Sahib shoot it?'

'About eight o'clock. And see that half-a-dozen men are ready with axes and knives to take out its tusks and to cut off its feet.'

'Very well, Sahib. It has been very furious to-day. It nearly killed Soojah the mahout,* as he was throwing a bundle of fodder to it. It chipped a great piece out of one of the posts with its left tusk as it thrust at him.'

'Is the tusk damaged?'

'Not seriously, Sahib, I believe. I have not seen it myself; but Soojah reports that a small piece is broken off the tip.'

'I would like to see it: the tusk may be cracked.'

* Elephant-driver.

So saying, Captain Eaton put on his sun-helmet, and accompanied by the old jemadar, stepped out of his office into the elephant-yard.

Captain Eaton was in charge of the government elephant kheddah or depôt at Jehanabad. It was a responsible and important post, for there were more than one hundred elephants in the kheddah, and several hundred men were employed as mahouts and fodder coolies and in other capacities to look after them.

Standing in rows in several huge and lofty sheds, supported by ponderous wooden posts, were the kheddah elephants, taking their noon-day rest. They were of all sizes and sexes, from the stately high-caste tusker to the little newly-born calf with its hairy head and short undeveloped trunk. They were all busily engaged in munching their fodder, consisting of great bundles of grass and green leaves and pieces of sugar-cane. All were in incessant motion, swaying their bodies backwards and forwards, shifting their legs uneasily, swinging their heads and trunks, and flapping their ears. Near by sat the mahouts and other attendants smoking, and watching their elephants feeding. As the Sahib entered the yard, they all rose quickly and salaamed to him profoundly.

Having walked through the sheds and glanced at the elephants, and given a few orders to the mahouts, Captain Eaton proceeded across the yard to a small shed in one corner, where, tethered by itself, stood a huge tusker. It was evident there was something wrong with the animal, for its legs were secured by huge chains, fastened to posts buried deep in the ground. A heavy chain was wound round its neck, behind its ears, but the ends had become unfastened, and were hanging loose.

'Shaitân,' or the Demon, for that was the elephant's well-deserved name, was a peculiarly dangerous brute. During the past three or four years he had killed several men, and had of late become so vicious that for several weeks he had not been taken out of the stable. He was kept heavily chained, and was constantly watched. His food was thrown to him from a distance, no one daring to go within reach of his long tusks or trunk. The torn-up floor, the splintered woodwork of the stable, and the great raw wounds on its legs caused by the chains in its struggles, showed to what fits of fury it was liable. It was now under sentence of death; for Eaton having reported that it was unserviceable, and also unfit for sale on account of its savage disposition, had received orders to shoot it.

The elephant was of great size; but its long legs, roach back, small head, and other bad points, showed it to be a low-caste animal. It had a pair of long, white, scimitar-like tusks, the points of which nearly touched the ground. It was mottled, especially about the forehead, ears, and fore-legs, with pale flesh-coloured patches, giving it a most unpleasant appearance.

As Captain Eaton, followed by the jemadar and some other men, approached, the elephant, which had been restlessly swaying itself backwards and forwards, stopped for an instant, cocked its ears viciously, and looked at its foes malevolently with its little pig-like eyes. Then it resumed its restless movements, as if unconscious of their presence, nevertheless keeping a

sharp lookout for an opportunity of striking at any one coming within reach. When the Captain had approached as close to it as he thought safe in order to examine the injured tusk, the elephant struck furiously at him with its trunk; and as he stepped back to avoid the blow, he heard a deep voice behind him say: 'Salaam! Sahib.'

Turning sharply, Captain Eaton found standing behind him a tall gaunt Afghan, clad in dirty and tattered clothes, and carrying in his sinewy right hand a heavy iron *ankrus* or elephant driving-hook. He was evidently an extremely powerful man; and his face was in keeping with his stature, for it was a somewhat uncommon one. He was very dark for an Afghan, and had a huge hooked nose like the beak of a vulture. The expression of his mouth, partially concealed by a flowing black moustache and beard, was hard and stern. Under his bushy eyebrows gleamed a pair of dark sunken eyes, painted round with henna, keen, fierce, and unflinching, like those of a wild beast. As Eaton glanced at him, he thought he had never seen so forbidding a face.

'Who are you?' he asked.

'I am named Bux Khân; I am a Kandahâri,' replied the man, in a voice of singular depth and power.

'What are you?'

'I am an elephant-tamer.'

'An elephant-tamer!' echoed the captain with a laugh. 'Would you like to try your hand on this specimen?'

'If the Sahib will permit,' was the quiet reply.

'By all means.'

Without a word, the Afghan tightened his waistcloth and settled his turban firmly on his head. Then grasping his driving-hook, he stepped fearlessly up to the elephant, and seizing it by one ear, shouted: 'Kneel down!'

Instead of immediately seizing him with its trunk, or attempting to drive its tusks through him, as all who saw it expected, the elephant shrank from the Afghan as far as it could, in evident fear. 'Kneel down!' thundered the Afghan again.

To the amazement of the lookers-on, the elephant slowly bent its knees and lowered itself in a crouching attitude. But the low rumbling noise it made, and the quick movement of its ears and fierce little eyes, showed that though overawed and startled, its savage nature was not subdued. Seizing the trailing ends of the chain round its neck, the Afghan made them fast. Then, to the horror of all who were looking on, he deliberately commenced to unfasten the chains by which the elephant was tethered.

'What are you doing? Let those chains alone!' shouted Captain Eaton.

The Afghan took no notice of the order.

'By Allah, I believe the man is mad!' exclaimed the old jemadar.

'Gracious powers, the brute will be loose in another moment!' ejaculated Captain Eaton, horror-struck at the impending danger. Stepping forward, he was about to seize the Afghan, in order to drag him out of the stable, when the elephant suddenly rose to its feet. It was too late. Its fore-legs and one hind-leg were free, and the Afghan was busy uncoupling the chain on its other leg. Shouting, 'Run, run all of

you!' Captain Eaton darted out of the stable, and ran at the top of his speed to his bungalow, outside the kheddah, to get his rifle, in the hope of being able to shoot the elephant before it did any damage. Another moment, and the huge beast was free. As the last chain fell from its leg, the Afghan sprang forward, and seizing the animal again by the ear, shouted in stentorian tones: 'Kneel down! kneel down!'

With a muffled rumble, half of fear and half of rage, the elephant knelt for a moment on its hind-knees. Leaping on to its bent leg, the Afghan clambered on to its back, and in another moment was firmly seated on its shoulders, with his legs securely twisted into the chain round its neck. A moment later, Shaitán strode out of the stable into the open yard with the Afghan on its back, and with head erect, extended trunk, and fiery eyes, ready to do battle with all creation. Its first effort was to get rid of its rider. Standing in the open, with one leg uplifted, it endeavoured to shake the Afghan off. But though his turban flew one way and his knife another, and his waistband was shaken loose, the Afghan kept his seat through the grip he had of the neck-chain with his legs. The instant the elephant stopped its efforts to shake him off, the Afghan raised his driving-hook, which he had never let go, and dealt some blows on Shaitán's head. Confused and maddened, Shaitán turned round and round, squealing with rage and fear.

Meanwhile, the whole kheddah was in the utmost confusion, and the uproar tremendous. All the elephant-attendants had fled, some outside the kheddah, and others into the buildings in the yard, dragging their wives and children with them; while the rest had climbed on to the roofs of the sheds or on to the walls. The elephants tethered in the sheds, excited by Shaitán's furious bellowing, were trumpeting shrilly in response, and straining heavily at their ropes and chains. The trembling elephant-attendants, looking on from places of safety, expected every moment to see some huge tusker break loose, and what would happen then, they knew only too well—a battle-royal between it and Shaitán.

Suddenly, with an ear-piercing trumpet, Shaitán rushed across the yard to where, tethered with two others, stood a sick elephant, quiet and listless. With one blow, Shaitán knocked it down flat on its side. It then lowered its head, to drive its tusks into the prostrate elephant; but upon being chastised by its rider the Afghan, it recoiled, and again attempted, though unsuccessfully, to shake him off. Another attempt to attack the other elephants in the shed was frustrated by the Afghan in a similar way. All at once, with head up, ears cocked, and tail stiff out behind, Shaitán turned and made straight across the yard for the great gate of the kheddah. By Captain Eaton's order, the gate had been shut, and ponderous wooden bars drawn across it. Seeing the elephant coming, the men on the top of the walls and sheds shouted, in order to try and turn it. It went straight for it, however. There was a tremendous shock, a loud crash, and the next moment Shaitán was outside the kheddah, and careering down the street into the town with Bux Khán still on its back.

A few seconds later, Captain Eaton appeared, running from his bungalow, carrying his heavy rifle. A glance at the shattered gateway showed him he was too late; but he determined to follow the elephant and shoot it as soon as possible. Calling on a couple of his men to follow him, he set off in the direction the elephant had taken. He had no occasion to ask the way; the crowds of excited natives that he met on the road showed the sensation that Shaitán had created as he passed. As Eaton neared the town, his anxiety lest he should be too late to shoot the animal before it had done some dreadful damage, became intense. To his great relief, however, he found that it had gone through the whole length of the town without injuring anything or anybody. In answer to his inquiries, the natives told him that it was going at full speed as it passed, and that the Afghan was still on its back. Captain Eaton followed the elephant for several miles beyond the town, but without overtaking it. At length, he gave up the pursuit, and returned to the kheddah, where he immediately ordered several fleet elephants to be got ready, and sent them off in charge of a number of steady picked men, whom he armed with rifles, to look for the escaped elephant. He determined to follow them as soon as he had seen to the elephant that had been attacked and thrown down by Shaitán, and had restored order in the kheddah.

About two hours later, while the captain was hard at work in the kheddah, a mahout, greatly excited, rushed in, exclaiming: 'Sahib, Sahib! Shaitán is coming back, and that mad-man is still riding him.'

'Has he been caught? Is he coming with the other elephants?'

'No, Sahib; he is coming alone, and that mad fellow is still on his back;' whereupon Eaton caught up his loaded rifle, which was leaning against the wall, and ran to the gate. He arrived there just as Shaitán entered the kheddah. But instead of a furious mad creature striding wildly along and trumpeting with rage, there entered a quiet, silent, subdued elephant with hanging head, limp trunk, and slow, weary step. As Eaton raised his rifle to shoot it, the Afghan shouted: 'Do not fire, Sahib. It is quiet now. I will take it to the stable and tie it up.'

Though greatly inclined to do so, Captain Eaton did not fire, but keeping at a safe distance, with his eye on it, determined to shoot it dead at the first sign of intended mischief. Guided, however, by the Afghan, the creature walked slowly and quietly to its stable, and knelt at his order. The Afghan then descended from its back and made fast its legs with the chains. Having next ordered it to rise, he walked round it several times and patted its sides, speaking encouragingly, as it shrank from him in evident terror. Then, having arranged his disordered garments, Bux Khán stepped quietly up to where Eaton stood and made his salaam.

For the last three hours, the captain had been boiling over with rage. That a strange Afghan—insane, as he supposed—should have come into the kheddah, released a mad elephant, and ridden off with it, after endangering the lives

of all the people and elephants in the place, was an occurrence so extraordinary that he could scarcely find words to express his surprise and wrath. But when the same Afghan proved to be a sane man and brought the elephant back safe, quiet, and amenable to orders, his wrath changed to admiration. The man's great stature, his striking though forbidding face, his iron nerve and coolness, and the strange power he seemed to possess, impressed the Anglo-Indian greatly.

'Well, friend,' he said, as the Afghan salaamed, 'you have given us a great deal of trouble this afternoon, and put the lives of many people in danger.'

'The Sahib gave me permission to try and tame the elephant,' replied the man quietly.

'That is true,' said Captain Eaton; 'but had I supposed for a moment that you were going to set it at liberty, I would never have given you permission. However, you seem to have been successful. Will the lesson you have given him be permanent? Will he remain quiet?'

'While I am with him, he will, Sahib.'

'Would it be safe for me to go up to him now?'

'No, Sahib. Though he fears me, and will not attempt to attack me, it would not be so in your case. It will be dangerous for you or any one but myself to go near him for the present.'

'What brought you here to-day?'

'I came to apply for work, Sahib.'

'Well, as you have been so successful in taking the fiend out of that creature, you had better remain in charge of it till I have decided what is to be done.' So saying, Eaton turned to the jemadar, and ordered the Afghan's name to be entered on the roll of mahouts at the same rate of pay as that drawn by Shaitán's former mahout, who was given other work.

After having given various other orders and had a good look at the conquered Shaitán, the captain walked off to his bungalow. The result of his meditations that evening over the strange events of the afternoon was that next morning he wrote a long report to government, detailing what had happened, and strongly recommending that the elephant should not be shot, as ordered, but left in charge of Bux Khán, the elephant-tamer. He, however, requested permission to shoot it at once, without waiting for the sanction of government, in the event of its breaking out again.

A NEW SAFE-DEPOSIT.

It is seldom that a private commercial concern is opened by the Lord Mayor of London, yet such was the case with the new Safe-deposit constructed by Mr Thomas Clarke in Chancery Lane, London, which was formally opened by the Lord Mayor in presence of an influential company on the 7th of May. Although, as the Lord Mayor remarked, this is a purely business undertaking, it is one of importance to the community, and one in which nearly all are interested, it being a provision for securing the property of individuals, the aggregate of which forms the collective wealth of the nation. In these days, when burglary has become almost

a science, and fires are so much more to be dreaded in our large cities and towns, owing to the ever-increasing denseness of their population, such institutions as that constructed by Mr Clarke, where cash, jewellery, plate, and valuable documents may be deposited in security, are much needed. There are, however, but few of them in this country, although in America there is scarcely a town of any importance that does not possess one.

The idea of constructing a public Safe-deposit occurred to Mr Clarke after reading accounts of the River Plate Bank frauds, and of the abstraction of deeds, and the like, in other cases; and that idea he has, it must be confessed, carried out in a thorough and practical manner. The Safe-deposit which he has constructed is situated in the basement of the block of chambers and offices called New Stone Buildings, recently erected by him in Chancery Lane; and the entrance from the street is under a handsome archway of polished red granite. The strong-rooms are approached by a broad staircase paved with white marble and mosaic, and are well guarded by massive iron gates, besides numerous attendants, whose business it is to identify persons as depositors or renters before allowing them to enter. After passing through the inner gates of the lobby, the internal, or safe, vestibule is arrived at. On the right hand is a strong-room for the deposit of plate, which will no doubt be well filled as the London season draws to a close. To the left is the strong-room for cash-boxes, which may be deposited in the evening and taken away next morning; for the convenience of customers in this department, there is a *grille* into the sub-manager's room from the lower external vestibule, through which the boxes may be passed and received again. On the side of the vestibule opposite the lobby are the strong-rooms, four in number, for documents and other valuables. These rooms weigh five hundred tons, with doors of two tons each, and are divided into five thousand separate iron safes, or 'integers' as they are called, none of which can be opened without both the key of the depositor and that of the custodian being used at the same time.

All the strong-rooms are lined with boiler-plates, having steel plates between them, and are built on iron columns, and completely isolated from any external walls; this arrangement allowing patrols to walk around, over, or under them, so that no one can possibly approach unobserved. In connection with each of the doors there is an ingenious clockwork arrangement which renders it impossible for them to be opened after being locked at night until the hour on the following morning for which the clockwork locks are set. On Sunday, it is arranged for one day to be passed over, so that the doors cannot be opened until the Monday morning. Thus it will be impossible for any one, even those connected with the place, to get into the strong-rooms during non-business hours.

The safes, which have been made by the Messrs Milner, are all constructed on the best known principles, every improvement in connection with safe-manufacture having been utilised by them.

Ample accommodation is provided for the customers of the Safe-deposit in the shape of well-furnished rooms, where depositors may examine the contents of their boxes at leisure, and the premises are lighted throughout with electricity (with gas in reserve). Altogether, the Chancery Lane Safe-deposit is certainly the best and most complete structure of its kind in this country, no expense apparently having been spared in its construction. We doubt not it will be well appreciated, as the want of such a place has long been keenly felt.

OCCASIONAL NOTES.

A NEW BUILDING MATERIAL.

ONE of the most recent American inventions of any importance is a building material, which may possibly not only supersede bricks but also wood and stone; for its inventors claim for it most of the qualities belonging to those substances. In America, timber is usually spoken of as 'lumber,' and this new material is called Terra-cotta Lumber. It is composed of clay and sawdust or spent tan bark well mixed together, moulded into the form of bricks, and burnt in a kiln. By this treatment the combustible portion of the mixture is destroyed, and a light and porous, but hard and durable brick is the result. It has somewhat the appearance of a rusk. The cost of its manufacture in America is about the same as that of timber, and it has the great advantage of being absolutely fireproof. The various influences so destructive to timber, such as fire, frost, gases, acids, and age, are said not to affect the new material; and it is a bad conductor of sound, heat, and electricity. Compared with bricks or stone, it is very light, so that not only will it effect economy in labour and carriage, but also in supports, more particularly in high buildings. Terra-cotta lumber can be sawed or chiselled like timber, and holds nails well. So bad a conductor of heat is it, that a slab an inch and a half thick may be heated to a red heat on one side, while on the other side a piece of paper can lie in safety. It will on this account probably be used for roofing in hot climates. If the material is found in practice to possess the foregoing qualities, a great future is doubtless in store for it; though whether it is sufficiently durable and water-proof to be used as a building material in this country, is a question which time alone can prove. There can be no doubt, however, that for inside walls and other sheltered situations, it would answer extremely well.

WOODCOCKS IN LONDON.

'London,' says a writer in the *St James's Gazette*, 'is almost the last place in the world where we should expect to find strange and rare birds; and yet, as a matter of fact, London is still the haunt of a large number of the British ornithological fauna. To take a single instance: the woodcock is almost everywhere a rare bird. It is shy in its habits; it flies high, and it is extremely wary and suspicious; and yet it seems that for years past the woodcock has not been uncommon in London. The correspondent of a weekly journal which interests itself warmly

in all questions of natural history has collected authenticated instances of the appearance of the woodcock in London within the last few years. The bird, it seems, has been seen at Clapham, at Holloway, in St James's Park, in the Regent's Park, in St John's Wood, on the banks of the Serpentine, in Eaton Place, in Portland Place, in Kensington Park Gardens, and in Kensington Gardens. It has been found in the Strand, where it was killed by flying against a telegraph-wire; in the Junction Road, Holloway, where it was shot; at the South Kensington Museum, and in Upper Clapton, where in each case it dashed itself to death against a window; in the St John's Wood Road and upon Ludgate Hill, where it was taken up in an exhausted condition. Now, for every woodcock that is either seen or captured, there clearly must be dozens that escape notice altogether; for Londoners, even when loitering in the parks, are not in the habit of looking out for strange birds.'

We shall be glad to add to this a list of any further stray birds that our readers may at any time have noticed in the metropolis.—Ed. *Ch. J.*

A W A I F.

'Humboldt once saw in South America a parrot which was the only living creature that could speak the language of a lost tribe.'—DARWIN'S *Descent of Man*.

Sad fate is thine, most desolate of birds,
Left lonely 'midst the strangers in the land,
Repeating still the old familiar words,
That none can understand:

Words soft with love or plaintive with regret,
Fierce battle-cries and songs dead poets sung;
The voices of a nation linger yet
Upon thy tuneless tongue.

Words that once, haply, as with trumpet-call,
Could thrill strong hearts, or draw forth prayer
through tears,
Now, in a vain, unmeaning jargon, fall
Harsh on our alien ears.

Who were they, that lost people of the past,
Whose speech has fallen to a parrot's tone,
Whose name and memory have sunk at last
To syllables unknown?

I hear thee answer, speaking evermore
That strange forgotten language of the dead,
But only dwellers on the shadowy shore
Can tell what thou hast said.

They come not at thy call, the vanished faces,
Nor any answering voice from out Time's wrack!
Vain is thy waiting in these vacant places
For those who come not back.

Wait on, poor waif; the ways of Time are strange:
Men like a dream will pass, nor come again;
But firm, 'midst all the tides of Chance and Change,
Thy story shall remain.

D. J. R.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.